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Official Records

President: Mr. Han Seung-soo (Republic of Korea)

*In the absence of the President, Mr. Kumalo
(South Africa), Vice-President, took the Chair.*

The meeting was called to order at 10 a.m.

Agenda item 21

Cooperation between the United Nations and regional and other organizations

- (a) Cooperation between the United Nations and the Latin American Economic System

Report of the Secretary-General (A/56/171)

- (b) Cooperation between the United Nations and the International Organization of la Francophonie

Report of the Secretary-General (A/56/390)

Draft resolution (A/56/L.34)

- (c) Cooperation between the United Nations and the Council of Europe

Report of the Secretary-General (A/56/302)

Draft resolution (A/56/L.31)

- (d) Cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization of the Islamic Conference

Report of the Secretary-General (A/56/398)

Draft resolution (A/56/L.36)

- (e) Cooperation between the United Nations and the League of Arab States

Report of the Secretary-General (A/56/474)

Draft resolution (A/56/L.26)

- (f) Cooperation between the United Nations and the Inter-Parliamentary Union

Reports of the Secretary-General (A/55/996,
A/56/449)

Draft resolution (A/56/L.35)

- (g) Cooperation between the United Nations and the Economic Community of Central African States

Report of the Secretary-General (A/56/301)

Draft resolution (A/56/L.25/Rev.1)

- (h) Cooperation between the United Nations and the Economic Cooperation Organization

Report of the Secretary-General (A/56/122)

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the interpretation of speeches delivered in the other languages. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room C-178. Corrections will be issued after the end of the session in a consolidated corrigendum.



Draft resolution (A/56/L.32)

- (i) **Cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe**

Report of the Secretary-General (A/56/125)

- (j) **Cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization of African Unity**

Report of the Secretary-General (A/56/489)

Draft resolution (A/56/L.37)

- (k) **Cooperation between the United Nations and the Preparatory Commission for the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization**

Note by the Secretary-General transmitting the report of the Preparatory Commission for the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization (A/56/317)

Draft resolution (A/56/L.38)

- (l) **Cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons**

Note by the Secretary-General transmitting the report of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (A/56/490)

Draft resolution (A/56/L.30)

- (m) **Cooperation between the United Nations and the Pacific Islands Forum**

Draft resolution (A/56/L.29)

The Acting President: I give the floor to the Executive Secretary of the Preparatory Commission for the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization, Mr. Wolfgang Hoffmann, to present the report of the Preparatory Commission.

Mr. Hoffmann (Executive Secretary of the Preparatory Commission for the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization): I am pleased to

be here today to report on the activities of the Preparatory Commission for the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization (CTBTO). The Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT), is one of the cornerstones of the international non-proliferation and disarmament regime. Its total ban of any nuclear test explosions in any environment will help end the development of ever more sophisticated nuclear weapons, and will arrest the proliferation of those weapons.

In view of the terrorist attacks of 11 September, the fight against the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction has acquired a new urgency. As the Secretary-General, Mr. Kofi Annan, put it in his opening address to the Conference on Facilitating the Entry into Force of the CTBT only three weeks ago,

"Those events should have made it clear to everyone that we cannot afford further proliferation of nuclear weapons. Nor can we afford to lose momentum in efforts to eliminate nuclear weapons from the world's arsenals. We must do everything we can to reduce the risk of such weapons falling into the hands of terrorists." (Press release SG/SM/8020, 11 November 2001)

Since my first address to the General Assembly, on 30 October 2000, I am pleased to inform members that the Treaty has been signed by four additional States and has been ratified by a further 23, one of which was an Annex-2 State, that is one of the 44 States listed in the Treaty whose ratifications are required for entry into force. Today, the Treaty has been signed by a total of 164 States and ratified by 89. Thirty-one of these ratifications are by annex 2 States. The level and pace of signatures and ratifications indicate the firm support of the international community for the Treaty.

The Preparatory Commission for the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization was established five years ago to carry out the necessary preparations for the effective implementation of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty and to prepare for the first session of the Conference of the States Parties to the Treaty. The Commission focuses its activities in two key areas: the establishment of the global verification regime to monitor Treaty compliance and the promotion of signature and ratification.

As of 1 December 2001, the Provisional Technical Secretariat comprises 266 staff members from 68 countries, with the percentage of women in the professional category having reached 27.9 per cent. Total budgetary resources approved for the financial years 1997-2002 amount to some \$408 million. Most of these resources have been dedicated to verification-related activities; in 2000-2001, only 18.5 per cent of the total resources were allocated to administrative and other non-verification-related programmes.

A key activity of the Commission is the establishment of a global verification regime to monitor Treaty compliance. This regime needs to be operational at the Treaty's entry into force. It will be capable of detecting nuclear explosions underground, in water and in the atmosphere. The verification regime comprises four elements. First, the International Monitoring System (IMS), with the International Data Centre (IDC), will be able to detect evidence of possible nuclear explosions. Secondly, a consultation and clarification process can clarify and resolve matters concerning possible non-compliance with the Treaty. Thirdly, States parties will also have the right to request an on-site inspection to determine whether a nuclear-weapon test or any other nuclear explosion has been carried out in violation of the Treaty and to gather facts which might assist in identifying any possible violator. Lastly, confidence-building measures will contribute to resolving compliance concerns arising from possible misinterpretation of verification data and to assist in the calibration of IMS stations.

The International Monitoring System consists of 321 monitoring stations and 16 radionuclide laboratories that monitor the Earth for evidence of a nuclear explosion. The IMS uses seismic, hydroacoustic and infrasound monitoring technologies to detect possible nuclear explosions. Radionuclide monitoring technologies collect and analyse air samples for evidence of the physical products created by nuclear explosions. Progress in establishing these facilities has been good, considering the engineering challenges that face the establishment of this first worldwide monitoring network. Over 270 site surveys have been completed. Twenty-two of the primary seismic stations, 75 of the auxiliary seismic stations, 3 hydroacoustic stations, 12 infrasound stations and 17 radionuclide stations have been completed. These stations now substantially meet the specifications

necessary for their certification as part of the IMS network.

A Global Communications Infrastructure (GCI) carries the seismic, hydroacoustic, infrasound and radionuclide data from IMS facilities to the International Data Centre. This global satellite communications network is also used to distribute data and reports relevant to Treaty verification to the States signatories. Transmitted data are authenticated against tampering. As of the end of October this year, some 65 IMS stations were linked to the GCI, some directly and some through one of seven independent sub-networks.

The International Data Centre supports the verification responsibilities of States signatories by providing the products and services needed for effective Treaty monitoring. The Centre receives raw data from monitoring stations around the world, which it processes, analyses and transmits to States for final analysis. Improved software is enhancing precision in locating the events which produce seismic, hydroacoustic, infrasound and radionuclide data, and the verification system as a whole is being continuously developed and refined.

On-site inspections, as provided for in the Treaty, are a final verification measure and the development of a draft on-site inspection operational manual is a key task for the Preparatory Commission. The Commission is also acquiring inspection equipment and building up a pool of potential inspectors.

The overarching aim of the Treaty is to contribute effectively to the prevention of the proliferation of nuclear weapons in all its aspects and to enhance international peace and security. However, the infrastructure and technology used to collect, transmit, process and analyse verification data, together with the data themselves, could provide States with significant scientific and civil advantages. The verification regime provides a comprehensive set of information about the Earth's crust, seas and atmosphere. Seismic, hydroacoustic and infrasound data can be used in studies of the Earth's structure and for research on earthquakes, volcanic eruption forecasting, tsunami warnings, underwater event location and sea temperature and climate change monitoring. The data can assist in minimizing the effect of volcanic eruptions on civil aviation and can be used for oceanic swell research and atmospheric and meteorological studies. Radionuclide technologies offer opportunities

for detecting radionuclide dispersion, monitoring radiation levels and studying natural radioactivity, as well as supporting atmospheric studies, biological research and environmental change tracking.

The Preparatory Commission promotes information-sharing through international cooperation workshops and other activities designed to further Treaty understanding, such as the Experts Communication System, a password-protected web site which offers States-designated registered users effective and prompt access to internal discussions and documents of the Preparatory Commission. The States are also offered training courses and workshops in IMS, IDC and on-site inspection technologies, thereby assisting in the upgrading of their national scientific capabilities in related areas.

On 15 June 2000, the General Assembly adopted the Agreement to Regulate the Relationship between the United Nations and the Preparatory Commission for the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization, thereby accepting the Preparatory Commission as a new member of the United Nations family. The Commission remains an independent international organization, but has been given formal status by which we can contribute to the goals of the United Nations. CTBTO staff use the United Nations laissez-passer on duty travel. We have concluded a services agreement with the United Nations Development Programme, which provides us with operational support. Our Liaison Office, situated in the United Nations buildings across the street here in New York, contributes to the implementation of the relationship Agreement with the United Nations and liaises with the United Nations Secretariat and other agencies of the United Nations system, the offices of regional, intergovernmental or relevant non-governmental organizations, as well as with the delegations here in New York.

Under this Agreement, our links and interactions with the United Nations and its programmes, funds and specialized agencies are developing even further and options for enhanced cooperation and support are under review. In order to fully contribute to the work of the United Nations family, the CTBTQ Preparatory Commission has requested full membership in the Administrative Committee on Coordination (ACC) or the United Nations System's Chief Executives Board, as it became in October 2001. The Preparatory Commission already participates in the work of the

high-level committees of the ACC, but this participation cannot replace full membership in the main coordinating body. In light of the disarmament-related issues in the Millennium Declaration, we feel it particularly important that the CTBTO Preparatory Commission be able to contribute fully to the work of the United Nations family.

We feel it is also important to report on our activities to the United Nations on a yearly basis. Fully aware of the wish of the General Assembly to rationalize its work, we believe that it would be of great significance for the General Assembly to be kept abreast of the rapid development of our new and growing organization on a closer basis. In times of increasing concern about the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, the reports of organizations specialized in this field should be of particular relevance to the deliberations of the General Assembly.

In closing, I would like to emphasize that, five years after its opening for signature, the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty has the confirmed support of the international community and is recognized as playing an important role in nuclear disarmament and in preventing the proliferation of nuclear weapons. The developing verification regime is ever more accurate in pinpointing the location of events and, in addition, the data already available to States signatories, in both raw and processed forms, can have valuable civil and scientific uses. As was unanimously declared by the Conference on Facilitating the Entry into Force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, which took place here at United Nations Headquarters just three weeks ago, we call upon all States to take steps to ensure that the CTBT enters into force as soon as possible. By signing and ratifying the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, States join a global community committed to ensuring that the world becomes a safer place for generations to come.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to the Director-General of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons to present the report of the organization.

Mr. Bustani (Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons): This is the first occasion, since the adoption by the General Assembly and the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) Conference of the States Parties of the

Agreement concerning the Relationship between the United Nations and the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, on which OPCW is officially reporting to this body on matters of particular relevance to the implementation of the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC). I am privileged, in my capacity as Director-General of the OPCW, to deliver this statement in fulfilment of this, hopefully, annual reporting requirement, to share my hopes and my concerns about the current state of affairs in relation to global chemical disarmament and non-proliferation, and to emphasize a number of issues — some brought to the forefront by recent developments — which call for prompt action by the international community.

This opportunity to address the General Assembly is particularly apposite against the backdrop of the monumental new challenges facing the world in its ongoing struggle against the evil of terrorism. The fabric of international security was torn apart by the cold-blooded murder of thousands of innocent civilians of many nationalities and religious beliefs on 11 September. The worst terrorist atrocity in modern history added an entirely new dimension to our concepts of security, which were largely based on the assumption that tensions and rivalries between States or groups of States are at the heart of the international order. In the three brief months which have elapsed since 11 September, many of these assumptions suddenly appear almost prehistoric. The new dangers and risks to international peace and security make it increasingly self-evident that only long-term approaches based on genuinely multilateral cooperative actions and solutions will eradicate the scourge of terrorism.

The extraordinary new challenge which confronts the international community does not lend itself to resolution by routine measures. The global fight against terror requires, in the words of President George W. Bush, the use of every resource at our command. And every such resource — national and international alike — needs to be used to its full potential. The most immediate burden falls on national and international law enforcement and intelligence agencies, on men and women in uniform, on diplomatic and financial communities and, above all, on world leaders. Yet global terrorist networks will be effectively challenged and defeated only through coordinated global efforts. The effective international coordination and sharing of information and activities

of individual nation States logically require the active involvement of international organizations — first and foremost of the United Nations.

The Secretary-General stated, in a speech on 1 October, that

“the greatest danger arises from a non-State group, or even an individual, acquiring and using a nuclear, biological or chemical weapon”
(A/56/PV.12, p. 3)

Well, they have already acquired and used some of these weapons. Religious fanatics used a chemical warfare agent — sarin — to attack civilians in the Tokyo underground in 1995. The desire of Osama bin Laden to obtain weapons of mass destruction, including chemical weapons, is also a matter of public record. The recent anthrax attacks in the United States are not attributable to natural causes. Are terrorists likely to stop there? Certainly not; under certain circumstances, chemical weapons have the potential to inflict even more damage than biological weapons. Chemical weapons can kill almost instantaneously, leaving no time for antibiotics or cure. Chemical weapons attacks require an immediate and massive response and rescue effort. Chemical weapons leave behind contamination which is extremely difficult to eliminate. Our inspectors still wear full protective gear when inspecting some former chemical weapons production facilities that stopped producing chemical weapons 15 years ago or when inspecting chemical weapons abandoned over 50 years ago.

Is the world prepared to deal effectively with chemical terrorism if and when it is confronted with it? Do we really appreciate the full extent of this threat? If terrorist use of chemical weapons, including toxic chemicals, ceases to be a dimly perceived but proven threat and becomes a persistent reality, are we ready and able to respond quickly and effectively?

This aspect of the problem is of immediate relevance to the 143 States members of the OPCW — soon to be 145 with the recent addition of Nauru and Uganda. It is of immediate relevance to the mandate that they have assigned to the Chemical Weapons Convention. It is also of particular relevance to those States parties which lack both the specialized knowledge and the institutionalized resources that might help them to defend or to protect themselves against chemical weapons. The Secretary-General is convinced, and so am I, that there is much which the

international community can do to help prevent future terrorist acts from being carried out with weapons of mass destruction by strengthening the global norms against the use and the proliferation of such weapons.

The OPCW is not a police agency. It has neither the mandate nor the expertise to hunt down terrorists or to foil terrorist plots. However, it is an international agency mandated to verify compliance with specific international legal obligations. In the words of the Convention itself, all States parties are "determined for the sake of all mankind, to exclude completely the possibility of the use of chemical weapons". This means use by anyone — terrorists included — and anywhere. This firm commitment on the part of 145 countries around the world provides a sound political foundation for the unique and authoritative role to be played by the OPCW, which is, after all, the international community's designated repository of knowledge and expertise in the global struggle against all possible uses of chemical weapons, including toxic chemicals. Having received the Security Council's invitation, the OPCW is ready to extend its cooperation to the Counter-Terrorism Committee and to provide information or assistance in connection with matters arising under resolution 1373 (2001).

The Convention, in a legally binding manner, prohibits the nationals of States parties from engaging in acts — including chemical terrorism — that violate its provisions. Member States are under a solemn treaty obligation to enact national penal legislation to enable them to prosecute such individuals. Thus, the CWC establishes a truly global legal norm against chemical weapons and against all those, including terrorists, who may wish to violate that norm. The harbouring of terrorists who are in any way contemplating the development or use of chemical weapons is a crime that should be punishable by law on the territory of each of the 145 States parties to the Convention.

The Convention also requires the OPCW to provide assistance to each and any State party which may be threatened with chemical weapons or against which chemical weapons have been used by anyone. Contingency planning for such a possibility is already well under way but, frankly, much more needs to be done if we are to be able to respond in the manner envisaged by the Convention.

Finally, the organization's very *raison d'être* — the worldwide elimination of chemical weapons and

the establishment and consolidation of a credible chemical weapons non-proliferation regime — will significantly lessen the probability that chemical weapons will be produced by or fall into the hands of terrorists.

The sooner the Convention achieves universality; the sooner all chemical weapons are destroyed; the sooner our chemical weapons non-proliferation regime is strengthened and consolidated; the sooner all States parties implement an effective legal regime, including penal legislation, to prevent the illegal use of chemicals and chemical technologies; the sooner the OPCW becomes fully equipped to provide timely and adequate assistance to those who might face the horror of chemical weapons attacks; the sooner will the threat of chemical terrorism be effectively contained and substantially reduced. In many of these areas, cooperation between the OPCW and the United Nations and other international organizations could contribute a good deal towards the achievement of our common objectives.

This brings me to what the OPCW has been able to achieve in all the aforementioned areas and also to what remains to be done. In many ways, the year 2000 was our most productive year to date. The year 2001 has, regrettably, been one of sacrifice and frustration.

One of the most inescapable issues of all is the need for universal membership of the organization. From 87 States parties at the entry into force of the CWC some four and a half years ago, the OPCW has now grown to 145 members. In that short period of time, we have achieved a result which took other multilateral arms control and disarmament regimes 20 years or more. The OPCW has undertaken wide-ranging efforts aimed at further increasing the membership of the CWC and is targeting its universality strategy at the rapidly diminishing areas of the world in which most of the current 50 non-member States are located.

The Chairman of the OPCW's Executive Council, Ambassador Abdel Halim Babu Fatih of Sudan, recently engaged in extensive and promising discussions on the margins of the new African Union summit in Lusaka, Zambia, with 16 foreign ministers from those countries on the African continent which have not yet joined the CWC. Earlier this year, with the assistance of Australia, New Zealand and the United Nations, the OPCW twice presented its case for

universality to the Pacific Forum countries. Last week, a regional seminar was held in Jamaica, primarily aimed at non-member States from Central America and the Caribbean, but also with the active participation and financial support of other regional actors. We need more of these cooperative efforts, bringing States parties and States not party together at the same table with a view to extending the reach of the Convention to the benefit of all.

There are, of course, other areas of the world in which the question of CWC membership, unfortunately, has become entangled, for a number of historical reasons, in a web of complicated and interconnected regional security problems. Security concerns, indeed, cannot and should not be taken lightly. This is why I believe it would be of utmost importance for OPCW member States to join me in engaging in and pursuing a constructive dialogue with the few States for which the question of whether or not to join the CWC goes beyond legislative priorities and has become complexly tied into the security dilemmas which they are facing.

The Chemical Weapons Convention is, after all, a voluntary alliance of sovereign nations and no one can, of course, be forced to join it. I am nevertheless convinced that it is possible for national security interests to be preserved through a variety of measures which will establish the level of confidence required for such outsiders to join the Chemical Weapons Convention. The steadily increasing membership of the Convention, even in those difficult regions, testifies to the validity of such an approach. Of course, States parties to the CWC, in particular those with considerable influence in such regions, should actively explore, along with us in the OPCW, all such measures which might enable a further expansion of the CWC's zone of responsibility.

We would also like to count on the support and cooperation of the United Nations in this respect. The collaborative dynamism of international developments since 11 September may well encourage those States that have not yet joined the Convention to see with starker clarity both the advantages of joining and the disadvantages of not doing so.

There has been significant progress towards the complete elimination of chemical weapons. All 8.6 million chemical weapons declared by the four declared chemical-weapons-possessing States parties

have been meticulously inventoried by OPCW inspectors item by item and are regularly being re-inspected to ensure their non-diversion. One fifth of these chemical munitions and containers, together with 6,000 tonnes of chemical agents, have already been destroyed since the entry into force of the Convention. All 61 former chemical-weapons production facilities declared by 11 States parties have been inactivated and closed down. Thirty-six of them have already been either completely destroyed or fully converted to peaceful purposes. Almost 64,000 inspector-days have been devoted to verifying compliance with the Convention on the territory of 49 States parties and three quarters of approximately 1,100 OPCW inspections have taken place at chemical weapons-related facilities.

I am nevertheless worried by disparities in the numbers of chemical weapons that have been destroyed by the United States of America, which has already destroyed 23 per cent of its stockpile, and the Russian Federation, which has yet to complete the destruction of 1 per cent of its chemical weapons arsenal. The United States deserves much credit for the energy and resources that it has devoted to this task. India's efforts are also to be highly commended.

I am pleased to be able to add that there has been a significant change in Russia over the past year. Chemical weapons, including the most advanced Soviet designs, are already being destroyed in Russia under the watchful eye of our inspectors. The first full-scale Russian chemical weapons destruction facility will finally become operational in the first half of next year. The importance accorded by the Russian leadership to the task of destroying its inherited chemical weapons stockpiles is reflected in President Putin's appointment of Mr. Sergei Kiriyenko, a former Prime Minister of the Russian Federation, to oversee the implementation of the Russian chemical weapons destruction programme.

Information on the revised Russian chemical weapons destruction programme has been submitted to the OPCW. What is needed at present is for this programme to be translated into a detailed project plan, and for Russia — together with its international partners — to review ways in which the current destruction schedule could be further accelerated, including through broader international involvement and assistance. The OPCW stands ready to make a constructive contribution to this process.

In spite of a number of practical difficulties, the organization has been able to lay down the foundation of a credible verification regime for the global chemical industry. We have thus far been able to preserve the integrity of this critical non-proliferation pillar of the Convention, even though the national authorities of a few of our States parties were perhaps attempting to be overprotective with regard to their own chemical companies. We are applying consistent and equitable inspection rules everywhere, and we will not deviate from this principle.

The OPCW has at times been accused of being intrusive. Yes, we are intrusive, and we have to be so, but only to the extent required by the Convention for inspectors to fully accomplish their tasks. We have never — and I stress, never — gone beyond what the Convention requires us to do, and, with more than 300 industry inspections now accomplished, we have not been accused a single breach of the OPCW's rigorous and exacting confidentiality policy.

While the internal integrity of the inspection process has been preserved, the integrity of the industry verification regime as a whole is seriously challenged owing to the insufficient financial resources allocated by States parties to the verification of non-diversion in the chemical industry. If we were to fully utilize the Convention's inspection ceilings, the OPCW should probably have conducted at least several hundred more inspections of industrial plant sites in addition to the 132 inspections budgeted for this year.

I should emphasize that this is not a wish list. It is fully consistent with the non-proliferation objective articulated in the Convention, and is amply emphasized in the records of the Geneva negotiations that gave rise to the Convention in the first place. The need for a higher rate of inspection of chemical industry facilities is based on a thorough evaluation of the degree of risk to the Convention of those facilities that have already been inspected, as well as on the application of the Convention's own criteria for inspections of other plant sites that are to be randomly selected for inspections.

The Convention's system of verification and compliance cannot realize its full potential if Member States with concerns about possible non-compliance neglect to make full use of this system, including the instrument of challenge inspections. The aura of negativity associated with challenge inspections has

perhaps been a major reason why not a single Member State has taken the initiative in this regard.

A challenge inspection is not necessarily a manifestation of distrust. Although it would certainly reflect a particular concern about possible non-compliance, such a concern — depending on its nature, of course — should not necessarily call into question the political commitment of the challenged State party to the Convention. I also fail to understand why a challenge inspection that did not prove non-compliance should be viewed as a failure. A challenge inspection is a measure which facilitates mutual confidence-building, and it should be seen in that light.

No matter how important verification may be, and still is, it is nevertheless not the whole story. Unfortunately, in the some four and a half years since the entry into force of the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC), the Organization has not yet been able to achieve consensus on the role to be played by its international cooperation programmes — which contribute to the economic development of States Parties — in promoting the Convention's goals and objectives overall.

It is profoundly disheartening to hear that the Convention is only a "security treaty", without any acknowledgement of the tremendous non-proliferation impact that international cooperation projects have on both compliance and progress towards universality. The allocation of only 6 per cent of the OPCW budget to international cooperation activities is hardly a meaningful incentive for developing countries to join the CWC. Fortunately, a few States parties have voluntarily provided modest funds to keep a limited number of such projects alive. However valuable and important such voluntary and individual acts of assistance may be, a few States cannot, and should not, indefinitely fill gaps that need to be filled by the Organization itself.

By now, only 40 per cent of States Parties have informed the OPCW that they have implementing legislation in place to domestically enforce compliance with the obligations embodied in the Chemical Weapons Convention. If this worrisome situation is not corrected, it is possible that violators of the CWC may escape prosecution in some parts of the CWC community itself.

The OPCW can and should do more to provide legal advice to those States parties that have yet to

enact such legislation. I recently proposed that the OPCW launch an intensive programme to ensure that all States parties have effective legislation in place to prosecute violators of the CWC who are nationals of States parties to the Convention, thus offering a meaningful deterrent against such criminal activity. I am heartened in this regard by the statement in the First Committee of the Assembly of Ms. Avis Bohlen, United States Assistant Secretary of State for Arms Control, who mentioned that it is essential for States parties to

"put in place national laws and other regulations that help to keep materials for making chemical weapons out of unauthorized hands and ensure effective prosecution of those who make or use chemical weapons." (*A/C.1/56/PV.5, p. 27*)

I am hopeful that funds to enable the Secretariat to carry out such efforts aimed at assisting specific countries will soon materialize.

A similar situation exists with regard to resources for the provision of assistance and protection to the targets or victims of possible chemical weapons attacks — in the form of gas masks, antidotes and medical supplies — in accordance with the requirements of the Convention. The majority of the States parties to the CWC do not have a national capacity to protect themselves from chemical attacks, including those by terrorists. The OPCW is at present the only internationally established source of such assistance.

While a number of offers of assistance have been made to the OPCW by 31 States parties that have the requisite resources and experience, there are serious gaps. The Voluntary Fund for Assistance, which is supposed to cover such gaps, today stands at approximately three quarters of a million dollars, barely enough for a one- to two-day assistance operation. The secretariat conservatively estimates that the amount of money in the fund must increase at least tenfold, if the OPCW is to effectively coordinate an adequate international response to a single request for assistance.

The level of commitment to a particular cause is usually proportionate to the level of resources made available to achieve the desired objective. The OPCW's verification workload has been increasing steadily since 1997, as required under the Convention, as have the demands on existing international cooperation

projects. An additional 4,000 industrial facilities around the world became inspectable last year. Yet the value of the funds available to the OPCW in each of the past three years has decreased steadily in real terms. The situation became truly unbearable this year, when the organisation received only 54 million euros of actual income, 6 million euros less than the 60 million adopted in the OPCW budget. This 6 million euro gap in OPCW income represents one third of all appropriations allocated for programme delivery and for the day-to-day operation of the Secretariat.

Other resources are required to pay personnel-related costs. As a result of this shortfall, and in spite of radical cuts in spending ordered by me in an effort to protect the key programmes — verification and international cooperation and assistance — the OPCW will be able to conduct only 70 per cent of its planned inspection activity this year, when measured in inspector days. In particular, this year we only have the funds necessary to carry out one half of the inspections planned and budgeted for in the chemical industry and at chemical weapons storage and former chemical weapons production facilities. We have inspectors at the ready, but we do not have cash in the bank.

International cooperation programmes have also been cut to the bone. And we cannot just fire our inspectors, as some were suggesting. They would all be needed, even today, if sufficient funds were available for the necessary inspections to go ahead. We will definitely need all of our inspectors, and even more in the very near future, as the rate at which chemical weapons are being destroyed picks up even further.

We warned our States parties more than one year ago, before they adopted the budget, of the scope and the consequences of this year's shortfall. We stressed that, as a result, programme delivery would be seriously affected. Yet, the budget remained unchanged.

Regrettably, with very few exceptions, we have not received any help since then, and we have had to deal with the consequences of this situation on our own. We barely managed to prevent the OPCW from closing down this year. I am not sure that we will be able to avoid this next year, when budget problems are only likely to increase. It is regrettable that the implementing agency of one of the United Nations' 25 core treaties has to send such a sobering message to the

international community at the dawn of the new millennium.

I fail to understand why it is not possible to provide the organisation with only 6 million euros — a meagre amount, yet critical for a robust monitoring of chemical weapons and their destruction and for implementation of a credible non-proliferation programme in the global chemical industry, in the context of the only existing multilateral disarmament effort which is up and running at present. Watching the OPCW stumble at this critical moment because it is under-budgeted cannot serve the national interest of any Member State, let alone of the non-proliferation and disarmament organization that each Member State has committed itself to support.

Is it not time for the international community to recommit itself to the noble goals of the Convention that it affirmed, both in 1993, when the CWC was signed in Paris, and again in 1997, when it entered into force around the world?

I constantly remind myself that these great disappointments must be measured against the Convention's outstanding track record of real success. The OPCW is indeed implementing a unique, non-discriminatory, multilateral disarmament and non-proliferation regime of unprecedented scope and sophistication. The reason why it exists is self-evident: one simply cannot dream of succeeding in a global endeavour of such magnitude without a democratic coordination centre, without a forum and an independent body for constant monitoring of the progress achieved, and without a multilateral organizational structure entrusted with taking decisions and shifting gears, if necessary, when the implementation of the regime so requires.

The OPCW is morally strong today because its States parties are assured that the Convention's rules and procedures apply equally to all of them. There are no double standards there; there is no preferential treatment. The professionalism and impartiality of our inspection and verification work have consistently drawn praise from our States parties and from the international community at large. The OPCW has an unequalled concentration of professional expertise from 66 different countries on both chemical weapons and the operation of the chemical industry, a capacity and a resource which is truly one of a kind and which has never been more greatly needed than now.

Our success since 1997, in particular as regards verification, is undeniable proof that multilateral international disarmament instruments can and do work very effectively indeed. The OPCW has already contributed in a very tangible way to the strengthening of international security and has done so at a fraction of the cost of its less multilateral alternatives. What is even more important is that we have arrived at today's result by consensus and cooperation, rather than through pressure or coercion. And with stronger backing from our "shareholders", the organisation can deliver much more and can become much stronger politically, as well.

One hundred forty-five countries have joined an international coalition to destroy chemical weapons worldwide and to prevent their re-emergence anywhere. The coalition exists. It needs to be built upon and put to full use.

The Acting President: Before giving the floor to the next speaker, I should like to remind delegations that, by paragraph 7 of the annex to its resolution 55/285 of 7 September 2001, the General Assembly decided that

"A joint debate shall be held on the cooperation item, during which all or some aspects of cooperation between the United Nations and regional and other organizations may be addressed."

I now give the floor to the representative of Equatorial Guinea, who, in the course of the statement, will introduce draft resolution A/56/L.25/Rev.1.

Mr. Ecuá Miko (Equatorial Guinea) (*spoke in Spanish*): On behalf of the member States of the Economic Community of Central African States, which my country, Equatorial Guinea, currently chairs, I have the honour, the duty and the pleasure of introducing to the Assembly revised draft resolution A/56/L.25/Rev.1, entitled "Cooperation between the United Nations and the Economic Community of Central African States".

Indeed, before summarizing the contents of this draft resolution, I should like once again to voice the profound and sincere thanks of the member States of the Community in general and of Equatorial Guinea in particular for the massive support this General Assembly gave to resolutions 55/22 and 55/161, of 10 November and 12 December 2000 respectively, the first dealing with institutionalizing cooperation

between the United Nations and the Economic Community of Central African States, and the second granting observer status to the Community in the General Assembly.

Over the last decade, the vast majority of the member States of the Community have been and continue to be the target and focus of political conflicts, fratricidal war and constant acts of destabilization, which day after day not only bring about the loss of many innocent lives and the disappearance and displacement of desperate populations on a massive scale, but also the systematic destruction of the fragile economies of the affected countries, and are the main reason for which their respective constitutional institutions do not function.

In this connection, and to overcome the gloomy and desperate situation in the subregion — which is essentially marked by the prolongation and recurrence of internecine wars and the emergence of new conflicts and hotbeds of tension — the Secretary-General responded favourably to the initiative of the Economic Community of Central African States and created the United Nations Standing Advisory Committee on Security Questions in Central Africa, in May 1992, whose work towards promoting peace and conflict management and prevention we commend.

For their part, since 1999, the heads of State and Government of the subregion have been demonstrating their firm willingness and determination to revitalize the Economic Community of Central African States, turning it into an instrument for promoting peace and security throughout the subregion and for cooperating for the development of their peoples and, on that underpinning, finding ways and means to meet the challenges of globalization together.

Indeed, the Council of Ministers of the Economic Community of Central African States, which met in special session in Malabo, Equatorial Guinea, on 8 and 9 October this year, adopted a programme of action of the general secretariat of the Economic Community of Central African States for the 2002-2003 biennium. Among other activities, the programme envisages making the bodies of the Council of Peace and Security in Central Africa operational, fighting drugs in Central Africa, combating the trafficking in small arms and light weapons, taking steps to ensure freedom of movement, making the Network of Parliamentarians operational, establishing a subregional centre of human

rights and democracy, having an autonomous financing machinery for the Community, liberalizing trade within the Community, holding consultations on sectoral projects involving cooperation in the framework of regional integration, creating a women's network in Central Africa, reactivating the Federation of the Chambers of Commerce within the Community, strengthening cooperation with other regional economic communities, preparing for negotiations with the European Union, cooperating with the United Nations system and other institutions, and so on.

There can be no doubt that a programme of action of such dimensions, which is indeed ambitious, will not succeed solely on the strength of the political determination of those that drafted it; it must also have the necessary assistance and cooperation from the international community, particularly since we are talking about a subregion that, while rich in natural resources, is stricken by political turbulence of all kinds.

The Secretary-General's report entitled "Road map towards the implementation of the Millennium Declaration" (A/56/326) skilfully and eloquently reflects strategies for moving forward to meet these goals, including, on page 43, "to give full support to the political and institutional structures of emerging democracies in Africa" and, on page 44, "to encourage and sustain regional and subregional mechanisms for preventing conflict and promoting political stability, and to ensure a reliable flow of resources for peacekeeping operations on the continent".

The tenor of the Secretary-General's report contained in document A/56/301 and the notes thereto reflect the embryonic nature of institutional relations established a year ago, tying the Economic Community of Central African States to the United Nations system. And it is on that basis that we take pleasure in presenting to the Assembly draft resolution A/56/L.25/Rev.1. Its preambular paragraphs once again include the key elements that sustain cooperation, both bilateral and multilateral, with the Economic Community of Central African States, with a view to guaranteeing peace, security and stability throughout the subregion and thus ensuring the needed and yearned-for economic, political, social and cultural development of its peoples through machinery designed to restore the rule of law, democracy, respect for human rights and an awareness of the challenges and opportunities entailed by the globalization and

liberalization of the economies of the countries of the subregion.

The operational part of the draft resolution takes note of the Secretary-General's report; welcomes and commends the assistance given to the Community; emphasizes the importance of appropriate cooperation between the United Nations system, including the Bretton Woods institutions, and the Economic Community of Central African States; and urges all Member States and the international community to contribute to the efforts of the Community to advance the process of economic integration and development, promote democracy and human rights and consolidate peace and security in Central Africa.

By the same token, the draft resolution urges the United Nations and the international community to help to strengthen the means existing in the region to ensure that the Community has the necessary capacity with regard to prevention, monitoring, early warning and peacekeeping operations and to support the creation of special economic zones and development corridors, with the participation of the private sector.

Finally, the draft resolution requests the Secretary-General to continue to broaden contacts with the Community, with a view to encouraging and harmonizing cooperation with institutions, and to report on the implementation of the present resolution—which we hope will be adopted by consensus—to the General Assembly at its fifty-seventh session.

On behalf of the sponsors and those that are partners of Central Africa, I should like to announce before concluding the additions that were made in operative paragraph 7 of the revised draft resolution, and I quote from the English text:

“and to implement the goals, targets and commitment of the United Nations conferences and the Millennium Declaration, in particular, to strengthen the role of women in the development process”.

After that, operative paragraph 9 will automatically be stricken from the revised text.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to the representative of India, who in the course of his statement will introduce draft resolution A/56/L.35.

Mr. Bishnoi (India): The need for cooperation between the United Nations and the Inter-Parliamentary Union is more real now than it has ever been before. Durable solutions for the enormous range of challenges and problems that most societies face require the promotion of democracy, of tolerance and of respect for diversity. It is those who overthrow these principles who also seek to strike at societies which uphold them as their highest goals.

The Inter-Parliamentary Union, through its commitment to the Universal Declaration on Democracy and to the promotion of pluralistic systems of representative government, can be an important ally of the United Nations in facing up to the challenges which confront the world community today.

We are indeed gratified that the Secretary-General's report reflects growing and mutually beneficial cooperation between the United Nations and the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU). The two organizations share common concerns: democracy, respect for human rights, equitable economic growth, sustainable development, social progress and the achievement of international peace and security. There is thus much that the United Nations and the IPU can bring to each other. Parliaments and the Inter-Parliamentary Union can be a bridge between the global and the local. By mobilizing public opinion, they can contribute to forging national support for international cooperation.

It is an honour for me, on behalf of the other sponsors, to introduce draft resolution A/56/L.35, on “Cooperation between the United Nations and the Inter-Parliamentary Union”. In addition to those listed in document A/56/L.35, the following delegations have joined in sponsoring the draft resolution: Algeria, Andorra, Argentina, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Benin, Bolivia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Burundi, Cameroon, Chile, China, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Cuba, Denmark, Egypt, Estonia, Georgia, Ghana, Greece, Indonesia, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Israel, Jordan, Liechtenstein, Luxembourg, Malaysia, the Marshall Islands, Mauritius, Mexico, Monaco, Mozambique, Namibia, Nauru, New Zealand, Niger, Nigeria, Panama, Peru, the Philippines, Poland, the Republic of Moldova, San Marino, Senegal, Slovakia, South Africa, the Syrian Arab Republic, Tajikistan, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Turkey, the United Arab Emirates, Viet Nam and Zambia.

The operative part of the resolution welcomes the ongoing efforts to explore ways in which a new and strengthened relationship may be established between the United Nations and the IPU and encourages member States to continue their consultations. It also welcomes the efforts by the IPU to provide for a parliamentary contribution and enhanced support to the United Nations and calls for the cooperation between the two organizations to be consolidated further.

It is our hope that the draft resolution can, like similar texts in previous years, be adopted by consensus.

The Acting President: I call now on the representative of Nauru, who in the course of his statement will introduce draft resolution A/56/L.29.

Mr. Clodumar (Nauru): Nauru has the honour to introduce draft resolution A/56/L.29 under agenda item 21, entitled "Cooperation between the United Nations and the Pacific Islands Forum", on behalf of the sponsors, and in particular in its capacity as Chair of the group of Pacific Islands Forum countries represented at the United Nations. I should like to announce that since the publication of the document the following countries have become sponsors of draft resolution A/56/L.29: Barbados, Belarus, Cambodia, Canada, Chile, France, Ireland, Japan, Malaysia, Norway, Pakistan, the Philippines, Portugal and the United Kingdom. I wish to express the group's sincere appreciation to those countries that have joined us in sponsoring the draft resolution.

The Pacific Islands Forum enjoys a special relationship with the United Nations through its observer status in the General Assembly and in the United Nations funds and programmes operating in the region. Over the past decade, that relationship has matured in terms of confidence and of a determination to strengthen cooperation in areas such as fisheries, small business enterprises, trade, human rights, democracy, peace-building and oceans management. The Forum and its member countries welcome what the United Nations can do and has done for our region, and we, in partnership, wish to continue offering our expertise and resources in doing more to work with the United Nations and in serving the wider international community.

As the Forum celebrates its thirtieth anniversary this year as the principal multilateral body in the Pacific Islands Forum region, the demands of our

members and those of the international community have also increased, thus shaping the interventions required by the organization. That confidence has been demonstrated, *inter alia*, through the initiatives and policy decisions set out in various declarations and communiqués of the Pacific Islands Forum.

As I stated in the General Committee back in September, Forum member countries requested the inclusion of this item as a new item on the Assembly's agenda. It provides a useful opportunity to consider the unique issues and emerging threats facing the Pacific Islands Forum countries. It also sharpens our commitment to facilitate wider dialogue between the United Nations and the Forum.

By draft resolution A/56/L.29 the Assembly would welcome the ongoing efforts towards closer cooperation between the United Nations and the Pacific Islands Forum, including the assistance provided by the United Nations towards the maintenance of peace and security in our region. The Assembly would affirm the need to strengthen that cooperation in the areas of economic and social development, as well as in political and humanitarian affairs.

The Assembly would urge the specialized agencies, funds and programmes of the United Nations system to continue to work closely with the Secretary-General to enhance the coordination of United-Nations-related activities in the Pacific. That will become increasingly important as we move towards the 10-year review of the outcome of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, which is to take place at Johannesburg next year, and the five-year review of the Millennium Summit Declaration.

We commend the efforts of the Secretary-General, Mr. Kofi Annan, to bring various regional organizations into the United Nations family and to advance our mutual political will to implement the outcomes of recent global conferences, of the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations and of the Millennium Summit.

Finally, we pledge our commitment to do our part; we hope that through this partnership of cooperation and friendship we can work together to reaffirm and enrich our collective efforts with a view to building lasting peace and bringing about sustainable development for our countries and the Pacific Islands Forum region as a whole. This is an opportunity that we cannot let go.

We seek the Assembly's support and recommend the draft resolution for adoption by consensus. We shall stand firm to make our contribution to its implementation.

The Acting President: I call on His Excellency Mr. Mircea Geoana, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Romania.

Mr. Geoana (Romania): I welcome this opportunity to address the General Assembly today in my capacity as Chairman-in-Office of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE). I have come to New York fresh from the conclusion of the ninth OSCE Ministerial Council, held in Bucharest on 3 and 4 December.

Before addressing the general topic of cooperation between the United Nations and the OSCE, I would like to say a few words about the outcome of that Bucharest meeting. The principal theme was inevitably the war on terrorism. In the immediate aftermath of the barbaric attacks of 11 September, the OSCE echoed General Assembly and Security Council resolutions in condemning those attacks as a dangerous threat to our security and stability and to our common values. As a reflection of the OSCE's determination to contribute to international efforts against terrorism, the OSCE Ministerial Council adopted, on 4 December, a wide-ranging plan of action for combating terrorism.

As I recognized in my opening address to the Council, the OSCE is not the lead organization on terrorism. However, we can play a role in addressing root causes — namely, political, social and economic weaknesses in society which extremist ideologies exploit. Under the Bucharest plan of action, OSCE States have pledged to expand existing activities which contribute to the global fight against terrorism and to increase bilateral and multilateral cooperation within the OSCE and with the United Nations and other international and regional organizations.

The OSCE will offer assistance to participating States in implementing international anti-terrorist conventions and protocols; it will increase its activities to promote the rights of persons belonging to national minorities and take action to prevent and suppress the financing of terrorist activities — for instance, through training in counter-terrorism-related issues for national financial personnel.

Other proposals for preventive action against terrorism include practical support for OSCE States through existing institutions, including supporting the law enforcement capacity of States and strengthening domestic legal frameworks and institutions that uphold the rule of law, as well as facilitating increased border monitoring where appropriate. OSCE States have also committed themselves to measures aimed at preventing the movement of terrorist individuals or groups, such as measures to ensure the security of identity papers and travel documents and to prevent their counterfeiting, forgery and fraudulent use.

The OSCE and the United Nations Office for Drug Control and Crime Prevention will be organizing an international conference on terrorism in Bishkek on 13 and 14 December at the invitation of the Government of Kyrgyzstan. The Bishkek International Conference on Enhancing Security and Stability in Central Asia: Strengthening Comprehensive Efforts to Counter Terrorism will provide the first opportunity to discuss the implementation of the Bucharest action plan, especially as regards practical support for the OSCE States in Central Asia.

We have asked the Secretariat to circulate to the Assembly the Ministerial Declaration and the other decisions and statements agreed in Bucharest by the OSCE Ministerial Council. These reflect the main concerns of the chairmanship and the OSCE member States during the past year and set out the direction for future activity. To save time, I will not summarize these now, but the details are contained in the text that is being circulated to the Assembly. We were encouraged that a consensus was reached on so many documents in Bucharest, which we believe is indicative of the new spirit of solidarity and determination that has emerged since 11 September.

Turning now to the areas of common interest and activity for the United Nations and the OSCE, I will report briefly on what we have done this year and make some suggestions, based on our chairmanship experience, on what more can and should be done to strengthen our joint efforts.

The United Nations and the OSCE share a common agenda on many issues. Our priorities are to build a safer and more prosperous world where human rights are respected, economic inequalities are redressed, conflict can be prevented and existing

conflicts can be contained and brought to a negotiated settlement.

There are considerable advantages to be gained from a rational division of labour based on the respective strengths of each organization. The OSCE's advantage lies in its specialization in building democracy, its field activities and the flexibility and speed of its response. We are fortunate to have the support of specialist institutions on human rights, national minorities and freedom of the media that are working to promote the rule of law and democratic institutions and to build multi-ethnic societies. We are unique in that we have a network of missions on the ground that are active on a broad range of issues, from election monitoring and judicial reform to border monitoring and police training.

The cooperation established between the United Nations and the OSCE in Kosovo, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Georgia shows the complementarity of our two organizations.

I consider our joint activity in Kosovo a regional model of effectiveness. Our cooperation in preparing for the elections last month for a provisional self-government, under Security Council resolution 1244 (1999), was exemplary. Following Mr. Haekkerup's success in finalizing the Framework Agreement, our Mission was tasked with the registration of political parties and voters, which it accomplished in spite of the tight deadline. In addition, it did an excellent job in organizing the actual elections on behalf of the international community. As a result of our concerted efforts, we have ensured that the new Assembly will be representative of all communities living in Kosovo. Non-Albanian minorities secured a sizeable percentage of the vote, which guarantees them representation in the 120-seat Assembly beyond the 20 seats allocated under the Framework Agreement.

The Assembly is already aware, from previous OSCE reports, of the success of the Kosovo Police Service School, through which the OSCE Mission provides police training, while the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) is responsible for deployment. To date, the Kosovo Police Service School has provided basic training to some 4,000 locally recruited police officers. These are important steps towards reconciliation and integration. The challenge now is for the United Nations and the

OSCE to encourage the development of transparent and accountable institutions which are self-sustaining.

In Bosnia and Herzegovina, we have continued to work on building strong institutions. A special area of activity has been our assistance in preparing new election legislation. This has now been adopted and implemented, so that future elections will be organized under the control of the newly established Election Commission. We are taking an active part in discussions chaired by the Office of the High Representative on the streamlining of the international civilian presence in Bosnia and Herzegovina in order to improve coordination and efficiency. We fully support this process and are willing to work with the Office of the High Representative on, for instance, closer cooperation in field activities.

One issue of special interest to me is the successor to the International Police Task Force (IPTF). As OSCE Chairman-in-Office, I am bound to be partial. However, the success of OSCE policing activities, not only in Kosovo but more recently in southern Serbia and now in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, has convinced me that the OSCE could also take on a similar role in Bosnia and Herzegovina. We have proven experience in this field in the Western Balkans. Our existing programmes are an integral and highly important part of confidence-building measures in the region. We have just decided to create a Senior Police Adviser post in the OSCE secretariat. We have a system of Rapid Expert Assistance and Cooperation Teams, which can identify field personnel and get them on the ground quickly. In addition, we are sufficiently flexible to work alongside other partners, such as the United States and the European Union.

In Georgia, where the OSCE works alongside the United Nations, the OSCE has seen some positive developments towards the settlement of the Georgia-South Ossetia conflict following a meeting of experts in Bucharest in September, although a comprehensive solution remains elusive. The border monitoring operation in Georgia is working well. The Permanent Council in Vienna has now been tasked by OSCE Foreign Ministers to explore proposals to extend the border monitoring operation to the region bordering Ingushetia in the Russian Federation. OSCE Ministers have called for a comprehensive settlement on the status of Abkhazia, where the human rights situation is a cause for concern. We are pleased that the Georgian

and Russian Governments have agreed to establish a joint commission to investigate reported cases of bombing in the Pankisi Valley.

The international focus on Central Asia has increased since 11 September. The OSCE Central Asian States have been concerned for some time about the threat to their security from the situation in Afghanistan. I believe it is time for the international community to devote more attention and resources to this region, and that this should continue even after the present situation in Afghanistan has been settled. The latest news from the Bonn talks is encouraging. I suggested at the Bucharest meeting of the Ministerial Council that we should explore how we might help to develop a concept of society in the region that would address the problems of security, democratization and economic growth. Building a "partnership for modernity" for Central Asian States and their immediate neighbours would be a useful venture for United Nations and OSCE collaboration.

The United Nations and the OSCE share a mutual interest in other important areas. I will now mention a very important effort that we have made over the last year to ensure that the right conditions are in place for the speedy and safe return of refugees and internally displaced persons. We are actively monitoring progress in the return of refugees and internally displaced persons in the Western Balkans, including steps for the restitution of property. In the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, our observers have recently begun to monitor the return of police to the villages affected by the conflict this year so that refugees and internally displaced persons feel confident enough to return home. We are working closely in this with field representatives of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR).

The cross-border threat to security and economic growth from organized crime calls for close cooperation at the regional, interregional and international levels, especially as the links between organized crime and the financing of terrorist groups become more apparent. We have been working in the OSCE to stimulate greater efforts by OSCE States to tackle these negative trends nationally and in cooperation with others.

Our focus in the OSCE this year on good governance and transparency was designed to help to find solutions to the problem of corruption, which not

only prevents the development of broad-based economic and social prosperity but also allows organized crime to flourish unchecked.

I should now like to say a few words on cooperation between the United Nations and the OSCE. The Romanian chairmanship, motivated by a strong belief in complementarity, synergy and a clear division of labour, has been keen this year to strengthen the interaction between the OSCE and our key partners, the United Nations, the European Union, NATO and the Council of Europe.

We welcome the latest report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of General Assembly resolution 55/179. We are particularly pleased with the increasing number of meetings between United Nations and OSCE officials, starting with my own discussions with the Secretary-General and the Security Council.

The lessons we have learned from the conflicts and crises in the OSCE area have highlighted the need for closer and more efficient cooperation among all organizations working together in Europe.

United Nations-backed cooperation between NATO, the European Union and the OSCE is a key element to stabilizing the Western Balkans. The system of consultation and coordination between the international community in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia that was set up on an ad hoc basis was a critical factor in resolving the crisis there this year. Consultation between the OSCE, the European Union, NATO and UNHCR is continuing as the process of reconciliation and building a multi-ethnic society advances.

But coordination and cooperation between international organizations should extend beyond crisis management to early conflict prevention, through building strong democracies, strong economies and strong societies. Secretary-General Kofi Annan stated in paragraph 6 of his latest report on the work of the Organization (A/56/1),

"Conflict prevention is of critical importance and requires a comprehensive understanding of the underlying causes and dynamics of violent conflict. The Organization's authority as a credible instrument to prevent conflict depends on its capacity to address the root causes of deadly conflict."

Based on our experience this year as OSCE Chairman-in-Office, addressing the root causes requires greater consistency in the application of the rule of law and human rights standards, especially those relating to the integration of ethnic and religious minorities; intensified efforts to reduce economic disparities through support for sound economic policies, backed by good governance and transparency; and efficient mechanisms for regional cooperation. This is an effort that requires a concerted strategy.

We need a clear process of consultation between the OSCE and our partner organizations, particularly the United Nations, NATO and European Union. Our joint efforts in the Western Balkans could be used as a model for introducing new methods of consultation, and our joint experience could be valuable in deciding how most appropriately to extend our partnership to activities in other parts of the OSCE space: in Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and, of course, Central Asia.

Existing procedures could be developed and expanded. I suggest a number of additional measures for United Nations-OSCE cooperation: the establishment of an efficient information exchange mechanism on potential crises and lessons learned from common field missions; exchange of liaison officers; joint training of staff in the field of early warning and prevention; development of common indicators for early warning; and establishment of a database on the conflict prevention capabilities of the United Nations and regional organizations such as the OSCE.

As a country that knows from hard experience the difficult process of political and economic transition, Romania is a firm believer in the multidimensional vocation of the OSCE. It is our hope that our 2001 OSCE chairmanship has confirmed Romania's credentials as a promoter of confidence and stability in Europe, and an active contributor in consolidating a community of prosperous and stable states, based on respect for shared democratic values. We intend to continue our active involvement as a member of the OSCE Troika.

The Romanian delegation to the United Nations is working closely with the delegations of the other OSCE Troika countries — Austria and Portugal and, starting 1 January, the Netherlands — and other interested delegations in preparing a draft resolution on cooperation between the United Nations and the OSCE, based on the documents of the Bucharest meeting of

the Ministerial Council. I would ask all United Nations Members for their support in adopting this resolution by consensus.

The Acting President: I now call on the representative of Lithuania to introduce draft resolution A/56/L.31.

Mr. Šerkšnys (Lithuania): It is an honour for me to take the floor today in order to introduce resolution A/56/L.31, entitled "Cooperation between the United Nations and the Council of Europe", submitted jointly by the 4-L group, namely, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Luxembourg and Lithuania.

I would also like to thank the other sponsors of the draft resolution for their contributions and support. I should like to announce that, since its publication, the following countries have become sponsors of draft resolution A/56/L.31: Belgium, Colombia, Greece, Ireland, Japan, Nauru, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

The Council of Europe has a long and successful history of promoting unity among its members on the basis of shared values of democracy, human rights and the rule of law. The Council of Europe has made an invaluable contribution to the promotion and strengthening of the purposes and principles of the United Nations within the European region.

Since 1989 the Council of Europe has included most of the countries of Central and Eastern Europe, including my own country, and has supported them in their efforts to implement and consolidate their political, legal and administrative reforms. With the accession of Armenia and Azerbaijan earlier this year, the organization now has 43 member States. It has thus become a truly pan-European organization.

Lithuania took up the chairmanship of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe on 8 November and will remain in the chair until May 2002. As Chairman-in-Office, Lithuania will seek to continue and increase dialogue and complementary action between the United Nations and the Council of Europe. We would encourage a regular exchange of views on issues related to the fight against and prevention of terrorism, organized crime and money-laundering. Intensive coordination in the areas of standard-setting for a pluralist democracy and respect for human rights will also be promoted.

One of the main areas of cooperation between the two organizations is found in the sphere of protection and promotion of human rights and fundamental freedoms. In this regard, important close cooperation has been developed, in particular with the Offices of the United Nations High Commissioners for both Human Rights and Refugees. The Council of Europe makes its contribution to the work of the United Nations by providing its expertise in strengthening human rights, democracy and the rule of law and by participating in human rights educational programmes. Of no less significance is pragmatic cooperation at the technical level, including joint assistance activities in matters such as human rights training of the staff of field missions, prevention of trafficking in women and girls and so on. The Council of Europe continues to contribute to major human rights events organized by the United Nations. Last year we praised the Council's activities in preparation for the World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance. Now the Council of Europe stands ready to follow up with implementation of the relevant principles at the European level. We expect the organization to make a significant contribution to the forthcoming United Nations special session on children and the World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg.

The Council of Europe has also given important support to the setting up of the International Criminal Court. On 10 October, the Committee of Ministers adopted a declaration calling on all members and applicant and observer States who have not yet done so to become parties to the Rome Statute of the Court as soon as possible and to adapt without delay their legislation accordingly.

Through its work, the Council of Europe has made an invaluable contribution to conflict prevention and peace-building and to long-term post-conflict peace-building through political and institutional reform. For this purpose, the Council of Europe cooperates closely with the United Nations and its specialized agencies and bodies in many ways. I would also single out the Council's active contribution to the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK), notably with regard to human rights, including the rights of minorities, reform of the judiciary, education, population registration and cultural heritage. At the request of UNMIK and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe

(OSCE), the Council of Europe assumed responsibility for observation of the electoral processes both for the municipal elections in September 2000 and the Assembly elections held on 17 November.

Let me also mention the major contributions of the Council of Europe to re-establishing public order, rebuilding democratic institutions and protecting human rights in Bosnia and Herzegovina, and its significant contributions to the Stability Pact for South-Eastern Europe.

Following the tragic events of 11 September, the Council of Europe reacted swiftly by agreeing on a broad package of initial decisions to strengthen its own action in the fight against terrorism. As an organization that since 1949 has dedicated itself to human rights, the rule of law and pluralist democracy, the Council by its very nature is an organization determined to combat terrorism, a phenomenon which repudiates these three fundamental values by resorting to violence.

At their meeting on 8 November, the Committee of Ministers decided to strengthen the legal framework established by the Council of Europe to combat terrorism and related forms of crime. It decided, among other things, to open the European Convention on the Suppression of Terrorism to observer States and to urge member States to sign and ratify all relevant conventions and to consider their reservations. The Committee also adopted a new convention on cyber-crime, which subsequently was opened for signature at a ceremony in Budapest on 23 November. This instrument and others that relate to the fight against terrorism are open to States from all of the regions. Furthermore, the Committee of Ministers set up a multidisciplinary group on international action against terrorism, responsible for making proposals designed to improve existing instruments, while ensuring their overall consistency with the Council of Europe's basic standards of human rights and the rule of law.

The Council of Europe will also contribute its experience and know-how to the promotion of a broad intercultural and interreligious dialogue, with a view to enabling our society to find greater cohesion and reduce the risks of misunderstanding. For this purpose, the Council will participate with the United Nations and other international organizations in promoting the dialogue among civilizations. The Council will take advantage of its special assets and pan-European scope and take account, in particular, of Security Council

resolutions 1368 (2001) and 1373 (2001), which the Council of Europe's Foreign Ministers have welcomed and which must be given full effect without delay.

It is important that regular exchanges take place between the United Nations, the OSCE and the Council of Europe on issues of common interest, in particular with regard to action in the field. Therefore the practice of high-level tripartite meetings has been established between the United Nations Office in Geneva, the OSCE and the Council of Europe. My delegation attaches great importance to these meetings, which should ensure efficiency and avoid duplication of efforts.

In conclusion, let me express my confidence that the General Assembly will welcome the wide range of cooperation that has developed between the United Nations and the Council of Europe. This is properly reflected in draft resolution A/56/L.31 on cooperation between the two organizations. My delegation wholeheartedly recommends adopting its text without a vote.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to the representative of Tajikistan, who, in the course of the statement, will introduce draft resolution A/56/L.32.

Mr. Alimov (Tajikistan) (spoke in Russian): On behalf of the sponsors of draft resolution A/56/L.32, and as the representative of the member States of the Economic Cooperation Organization, it is a great honour for me to introduce this draft resolution, entitled "Cooperation between the United Nations and the Economic Cooperation Organization".

It is important to point out that, during the time which has passed since the adoption of the Assembly's previous resolution on this subject, cooperation between the United Nations and the Economic Cooperation Organization has continued to grow on the broadest basis. This is certainly evidence of the fact that, on the one hand, the Economic Cooperation Organization has become an effective, functioning community of States with common socio-economic goals and objectives. On the other hand, it shows an increasing interest on the part of the international community in the region where Afghanistan, Azerbaijan, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Pakistan, Tajikistan, Turkey, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan are located.

The draft resolution before us indicates that one of the main objectives of the United Nations and the Economic Cooperation Organization is to promote international cooperation in solving international problems of an economic, social, cultural or humanitarian nature. It expresses grave concern about the prevalent drought and its devastating impact on the socio-economic situation in some of the States members of the organization.

The draft resolution stresses the importance of expanding international cooperation in resolving problems of globalization of the region of the Economic Cooperation Organization, through the integration of member States into the world economy. It notes with satisfaction that cooperation between the United Nations Development Programme and the Economic Cooperation Organization is growing, and it welcomes the increased cooperation between the Economic Cooperation Organization and the International Trade Centre, the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development and the World Trade Organization. The draft resolution also welcomes the growing cooperation between the Economic Cooperation Organization and the international financial institutions, as well as the efforts of the member States of the Economic Cooperation Organization in opening international passenger traffic through the Trans-Asian Railway main line.

The document expresses appreciation of United Nations resolution 55/181, of 21 December 2000, on the transit environment in landlocked States in Central Asia and their transit developing neighbours. It notes the increasing problem of the production, transit and abuse of narcotic drugs and their ill effects on the region, and calls upon international and regional organizations to assist, as appropriate, the Economic Cooperation Organization in fighting the menace of narcotics in the region.

The draft resolution appreciates the cooperation between the Economic Cooperation Organization and the Centre for International Crime Prevention. It notes with satisfaction the expansion of cultural ties in the region, under the auspices of the Cultural Institute of the Economic Cooperation Organization, and supports endeavours to promote the region's rich cultural and literary heritage, with possible assistance from the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization and other relevant entities.

The document contains an invitation to the United Nations to continue to provide technical assistance to member States of the Economic Cooperation Organization and its secretariat in strengthening their early warning systems, preparedness and capacity for timely response to natural disasters in order to reduce the human casualties and socio-economic impact of such disasters. It requests the Secretary-General to present to the fifty-seventh session of the General Assembly a report on the implementation of the present resolution, and would have the General Assembly include in the provisional agenda of its fifty-seventh session the question of cooperation between the United Nations and the Economic Cooperation Organization.

The sponsors express their gratitude to the delegations of the European Union and the United States, which have made a valuable contribution to preparing the draft resolution, and suggest that it be adopted by consensus.

The Acting President: I now call on the representative of Lebanon, who, in the course of his statement, will introduce draft resolution A/56/L.34.

Mr. Tadmoury (Lebanon) (spoke in French): I would first like to join those who have preceded me in expressing our deep gratitude to the Secretary-General for the quality and accuracy of his report entitled "Cooperation between the United Nations and the International Organization of la Francophonie". I would also like to thank the Secretary-General of the International Organization of la Francophonie (OIF), Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali, for his constant efforts to promote both the role of OIF and the development of its relations with the United Nations.

There is no doubt that Lebanon has done its best to be prepared to host under the best conditions possible the Ninth Conference of Heads of State and Government of countries using French as a common language, which was supposed to have been held from 26 to 28 October. However, as the Assembly knows, the consultations carried out by the Secretary-General of OIF in the wake of the uncertainties brought about by developments in the international situation have regrettably resulted in the postponement of the Summit until the fall of 2002.

Lebanon, in this regard, is determined to do all it can so that, next fall, we can discuss in Beirut the theme "dialogue of cultures", which is all the more urgent in the face of risks of intolerance, exclusion and

withdrawal, particularly after the dramatic events of 11 September.

I am deeply honoured now to present, on behalf of the countries of la Francophonie, the draft resolution on cooperation between the United Nations and OIF. It should be pointed out that the following countries have joined the ranks of its sponsors: Albania, Angola, Barbados, Cyprus, Egypt, Hungary and Ukraine.

Fortunately, cooperation between the United Nations and OIF has never failed to embrace not only the concerns of the member countries of la Francophonie, but also those of non-governmental, intergovernmental and regional organizations.

The draft resolution before us involves a number of aspects.

In political terms, cooperation between OIF and the United Nations is intensifying and taking the form of regular consultations between the secretariats of both organizations, consultations that pertain to a variety of subjects.

In this spirit of cooperation, OIF is becoming ever more directly involved in the work of the United Nations, as demonstrated at the Fourth High-Level Meeting between the United Nations and Regional Organizations, held in New York on 6 and 7 February 2001. At that gathering, OIF made a valuable contribution to international cooperation with regard to the consolidation of peace in all its forms.

Since the Eighth Summit, held in Moncton, Canada, OIF has broadened its political outreach with a view to facilitating conflict resolution in various African countries and encouraging the promotion of the rule of law, democracy and respect for human rights, as well as conflict prevention.

In economic, social and cultural terms, OIF and the United Nations have accelerated the pace of their cooperation, as shown in their close collaboration in the area of technical assistance for economic and social development, particularly in the least developed countries.

OIF has participated actively in expert meetings held within the United Nations to promote the role of women in civil society, in conformity with commitments undertaken at the Beijing Summit.

I should also emphasize that cooperation between OIF and the specialized agencies in the fields of

education, science and culture has both yielded fruitful results and intensified. An example of this is the support of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) for the Francophone Institute for Energy and the Environment, as well as UNESCO's active participation in cultural activities of la Francophonie at French-speaking universities in Africa and Lebanon. These examples of cooperation reflect the dedication of the United Nations and OIF to the values upheld by both organizations in the service of economic and social development and cultural diversity.

I would like to point out that cooperation between OIF, the specialized agencies, and the funds and programmes of the United Nations, as well as the regional commissions, particularly the Economic Commission for Africa, should be strengthened as soon as possible so that we can promote poverty elimination, energy, sustainable development, education, training and the development of new information technologies, as stipulated in operative paragraph 14 of the draft resolution.

Lebanon very much hopes to see cooperation between the United Nations and OIF strengthened and expanded into ever increasing and diverse areas. It is from that perspective that my delegation invites the General Assembly to give its full support to the draft resolution.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to the representative of Egypt to introduce draft resolution A/56/L.26.

Mr. Aboul Gheit (Egypt) (spoke in Arabic): I have the honour to present, on behalf of the States members of the League of Arab States, the draft resolution contained in A/56/L.26, under agenda item 21 (e), "Cooperation between the United Nations and the League of Arab States".

I wish to inform the General Assembly that the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia has joined the list of sponsors of the draft resolution.

The League of Arab States was founded at the same time as the United Nations, in March 1945. Close links bind the two organizations, enabling the necessary cooperation and coordination, under Article 8 of the Charter, which is a source of pride for us. These relations have progressed ever since the General Assembly, at its forty-eighth session, adopted by

consensus the resolution on cooperation between the organizations. Currently, the relationship between the United Nations and the League of Arab States is witnessing various forms of cooperation. Questions of common interest are basically those linked to international peace and security.

In this respect, and in the context of the events currently taking place in the occupied Arab territories, we feel that this cooperation should be increased and that the United Nations should play a larger role in putting an end to the continued aggression against the Palestinian people by Israeli occupation forces and in ending the occupation of Arab lands.

In addition, there is an urgent need to increase cooperation between the United Nations and the League of Arab States in the economic, social and developmental areas, in particular in order to speed up development in the Arab world, and to achieve the joint objectives of both organizations.

The preambular paragraphs of the draft resolution reaffirm the two organizations' wish to strengthen their links in all areas and to continue to cooperate in order to achieve their common objectives.

As to the operative section, in paragraph 3, the draft resolution expresses the General Assembly's appreciation

"to the Secretary-General for the follow-up action taken by him to implement the proposals adopted at the meetings between the representatives of the secretariats of the United Nations and other organizations of the United Nations system and the General Secretariat of the League of Arab States and its specialized organizations, including the general meeting on cooperation between the United Nations system and the League of Arab States and its specialized organizations, held from 17 to 20 July 2001".

The operative part also calls for increased cooperation in the political, economic, social, cultural and humanitarian areas. It also calls upon the specialized agencies and United Nations programmes to continue their support for and cooperation with the League of Arab States and to strengthen the capacity of member States of the League, especially in the area of information technology. Paragraph 6 (f) also calls upon the specialized agencies and other organizations and programmes of the United Nations system to inform

the Secretary-General, not later than 30 June 2002, of the progress made with regard to these objectives.

I wish on behalf of the Arab Group to call upon the General Assembly, which represents the international community, to support cooperation between the League of Arab States and the United Nations, and to adopt the draft resolution before us by consensus.

The Acting President: I now call on the representative of Zambia to introduce draft resolution A/56/L.37.

Mr. Musambachime (Zambia): It gives me great pleasure to be accorded this opportunity to introduce, on behalf of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) and the African Group, the draft resolution on cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization of African Unity, contained in document A/56/L.37. At the outset, I would like to express sincere gratitude to our cooperating partners for their contributions in formulating this draft resolution. These include, among others, the European Union, Japan, the Russian Federation and the United States of America.

This draft resolution contains elements of the previous resolution on this subject while also reflecting new issues, such as the establishment of the African Union and the transition from the Organization of African Unity/African Economic Community to the African Union; the launching of the New African Initiative, now called the New Partnership for Africa's Development; and Africa's commitment to the fight against terrorism, as provided for in the OAU Convention on the Prevention and Combating of Terrorism, adopted at the thirty-fifth ordinary session of the Assembly of Heads of State and Government of the OAU in July 1999.

The draft resolution stresses the need for closer cooperation and coordination between the OAU and the United Nations in the area of peace and security, particularly with regard to conflict prevention, peacekeeping, peacemaking, post-conflict reconstruction, peace-building, support for democratization processes and good governance. Unless these elements are properly addressed and made operational, Africa's sustainable economic development and growth and the alleviation and eradication of poverty on the continent will remain remote pipe dreams.

The draft resolution on cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization of African Unity is hereby presented for consideration, and it is our sincere hope that it will be adopted by consensus.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to the representative of Indonesia who, in the course of his statement, will introduce draft resolution A/56/L.38.

Mr. Soeriaatmadja (Indonesia): It is indeed a pleasure for my delegation to speak in the current General Assembly deliberations on agenda item 21, entitled "Cooperation between the United Nations and regional and other organizations".

The cooperation between the United Nations and regional organizations is of paramount importance, particularly since challenges to humankind cannot be solely the responsibility of the United Nations. Due to the lack of resources, the United Nations has not always been capable of addressing issues that are critical to the international community.

The relevance of regional organizations in conflict resolution is undeniable, as they are uniquely placed to deal with region-specific problems. Successful regional efforts will depend not only on good relationships among member States of the organizations, but also on concurrent political commitment from each and every State in the region in particular, and the general support of the international community, through the United Nations.

The history of the United Nations notes a number of cases of thriving cooperation. In coping with the Haiti crisis in 1992-1993, for example, the United Nations cooperated with the Organization of American States. In the 1990s the United Nations and the Organization of African Unity (OAU) together made efforts to restore peace in Somalia, Liberia, Burundi, Eritrea, Malawi and Rwanda. Concurrently, the Organization cooperated with the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) in addressing conflicts in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Georgia and Kosovo.

The importance of this cooperation was given more weight when world leaders, in the Millennium Declaration, reiterated their commitment to support cooperation. My delegation supports the strategies for strengthening cooperation between the United Nations and regional organizations, as outlined in the Secretary-General's "Road map towards the

implementation of the United Nations Millennium Declaration".

We also welcome the principles and mechanisms suggested for cooperation between the United Nations and regional organizational arrangements in the field of peacekeeping, as developed by the United Nations Department of Peacekeeping Operations.

My delegation continues to see the need for further study of modalities of cooperation within the context of emerging inter-multilateralism and in keeping with the spirit of Chapter VIII of the United Nations Charter. Such further study could be carried out, *inter alia*, on the basis of referral by the Security Council and through subcontracting and partnership.

Let me now turn to some specific aspects of cooperation between the United Nations and regional and other organizations that are of interest to my delegation. As regards cooperation between the United Nations and the Latin American Economic System, the Council of Europe, the League of Arab States, the Economic Community of Central African States, the Economic Cooperation Organization, the OSCE, the OAU and the Pacific Islands Forum, we believe that such cooperation will contribute to the economic growth and political stability of their respective regions.

Indonesia has supported the endeavours of the United Nations in addressing conflicts in different regions by actively contributing personnel to United Nations missions in those regions. In Africa, Indonesia has been participating in the United Nations Missions in Sierra Leone and the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and in Europe, in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Georgia.

Indonesia accords special attention to the cooperation between the United Nations and the Pacific Islands Forum. We fully support this cooperation, and we are very pleased to be one of the sponsors of the draft resolution on this issue. Indonesia also has been active in the Forum as a post-Forum dialogue partner.

As regards cooperation between the United Nations and the International Parliamentary Union (IPU), we believe that the United Nations and the IPU can work collectively in seeking solutions to the emerging economic and security challenges facing us and in charting a better future for all humankind through the establishment of a new family of nations

that upholds the purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter. We hold the view that synchronized United Nations-IPU commitments are required in order to set a coherent course of action in addressing common issues.

Indonesia welcomes the Secretary-General's initiative, as outlined in his report entitled "Road map towards the implementation of the United Nations Millennium Declaration", to conduct a joint review with the IPU of the cooperation agreement concluded between the organizations in 1996. With regard to the strategy of more engagement of parliaments in substantive issues addressed at the United Nations, in our view, further study of the modalities of that strategy remains imperative.

As far as the cooperation between the United Nations and the Preparatory Commission for the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization (CTBTO) is concerned, my delegation holds the view that the relationship agreement between the United Nations and the Preparatory Commission for the CTBTO, adopted on 15 June 2000, established an important foundation for improving the existing links and interaction between the two independent organizations. Better relationships may facilitate the achievement of the overarching aim of the Treaty — namely, to effectively contribute to the prevention of the proliferation of nuclear weapons in all its aspects and to the promotion of international peace and security.

There is a common view among States signatories that full membership of the CTBTO in the Administrative Committee on Coordination will not only facilitate coordination and cooperation between the Preparatory Commission for the CTBTO and the wider United Nations family, but will also allow the Preparatory Commission for the CTBTO to fully contribute to the common effort of the international community to implement the Millennium Declaration.

My delegation shares the view that in times of increasing concern about the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, the reports of the Preparatory Commission for the CTBTO should be of particular relevance to the deliberations of the General Assembly. We deem it important that the Assembly receive reports about the developments and activities of the Preparatory Commission for the CTBTO on a regular basis.

Before I conclude, in its capacity as Chairman of the Preparatory Commission for the CTBTO, my delegation has the honour and pleasure to present to this plenary meeting a draft resolution, contained in document A/56/L.38, concerning the cooperation between the United Nations and the Preparatory Commission. This draft resolution, which is procedural in nature, would serve as a basis for the CTBTO to present its report on its activities to the General Assembly in its session next year. We hope that Member States will lend their unanimous support to the draft resolution.

Mr. Baali (Algeria) (spoke in French): Beginning with this session, cooperation between the United Nations and the whole complement of regional organizations is being examined under a single agenda item. While we support this reform, the obvious goal is to rationalize the work of the General Assembly and make it more efficient, my delegation would like to stress the interest in and importance of continuing to examine this agenda item in the course of our work.

Some days ago, in the context of the agenda item on the causes of conflict in Africa, we took up the reports of the Secretary-General and of the Working Group dealing with this issue. My delegation made its contribution at that time, setting out in a somewhat detailed way the set of problems impinging on peace and development across the African continent in the light of the recommendations embodied in the report of the Secretary-General on the causes of conflict in Africa. I will therefore confine myself today to taking stock of some salient aspects of cooperation between the Organization of African Unity (OAU) and the United Nations specifically from the institutional perspective.

The consideration at this session of issues related to cooperation between the two organizations is taking place in the specific context in which the OAU's ongoing transition into the African Union will itself be a major factor affecting cooperation between the two organizations. The birth of the African Union is a historic event in that it constitutes a new framework Africans have endowed themselves with almost 40 years after the adoption of the OAU charter to promote multifaceted cooperation and effective integration across the continent.

In that regard, we note with satisfaction the readiness of the United Nations, referred to in

paragraph 4 of the Secretary-General's report, to consider, together with the OAU, ways it can help the latter to put in place the new structural framework for the African Union. African countries currently committed to an exciting and demanding collective effort naturally expect substantial support from the United Nations and other regional groups to make it possible for them to derive maximum benefit from their experiences and, thus, enter into the new Union with optimal chances of success.

The Thirty-seventh OAU Summit, held in Lusaka last July, decided that the African Union would come into force at the next Summit. The next few months will therefore be a crucial period in the establishment of very important structures among the 17 bodies identified by the Constituent Act of the African Union, namely, the Conference of the Union, the Executive Council, the Committee of Permanent Representatives and the Commission. We are therefore more confident than ever that, as far as the prospects for cooperation between the two organizations are concerned, there already exists a considerable and mutually beneficial capital of experience and know-how. Proof of that are the numerous coordinating meetings that have been held between the two organizations, notably those held regularly every year between their respective secretaries-general. We call for strengthening those consultations and consolidating the United Nations OAU Liaison Office at Addis Ababa, given the paramount role this structure is called upon to play in coordinating and disseminating information between both organizations, particularly in the context of cooperation in the areas of peace and security on the continent.

We are talking here about the most important sector of this cooperation, in which we have together made some progress in recent years. The deployment of four peacekeeping missions on the continent — namely, the United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara (MINURSO), the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL), the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC) and the United Nations Mission in Ethiopia and Eritrea (UNMEE) — and the encouraging results achieved to date bear witness, in our view, to positive developments in effectively coming to grips with issues of peace and security in Africa. Whether we are talking about the settlement plan for Western Sahara, the Lomé

and Abuja agreements on Sierra Leone, the Lusaka Agreement on the conflict in the Democratic Republic of the Congo or the Algiers agreements on Ethiopia and Eritrea, coordination and cooperation between the OAU and the United Nations has been decisive in bringing to a successful conclusion the numerous peace efforts entered into by African leaders.

As to the membership of those missions, we should note the major involvement of African contingents in the military component, which illustrates — if there be need for it — that Africans are effectively contributing to the collective efforts of the international community. Greater logistical and technical assistance from developed countries in this area is nevertheless necessary and desirable.

While reiterating the primary responsibility incumbent upon the United Nations and the Security Council — in particular in maintaining peace and security throughout the world — it seems to us necessary that both the United Nations and the OAU jointly look at the status and level of coordination on the ground between the missions deployed by the Security Council and the bodies set up by the parties in the context of peace accords. Those include, for example, the Joint Military Commission in the context of MONUC, and the OAU observers in MINURSO.

Likewise, in the context of the conflict between Ethiopia and Eritrea, we should recall Algeria's tireless efforts at the helm of the OAU to put an end to that war between two fraternal countries and to lay the groundwork for a just and lasting political settlement between them. In the course of the laborious process that led to the Algiers agreements of 18 June and 12 December 2000, Algeria and the OAU, which were able to count on the backing of such partners as the United States and the European Union, regularly coordinated their efforts with the United Nations. The speed with which the Security Council acted to adopt resolution 1312 (2000), which set up UNMEE on 31 July 2000 — less than a month after the signing of the Algiers Agreement — clearly illustrates the level of coordination and consultation between the two organizations. The establishment of the Military Coordination Commission in accordance with the Agreement on Cessation of Hostilities, and the logistical support given to OAU observers by UNMEE, made it possible for both organizations to pool their efforts in order to resolve military problems on the

ground and to create favourable conditions to bring the political process to a successful conclusion.

As to the OAU-United Nations settlement plan for Western Sahara, we wish to point out the particular importance that Africa attaches to the comprehensive implementation of that plan in good faith by both parties to the conflict, including by organizing a referendum on self-determination — the logical conclusion of the matter. Moreover, the OAU has constantly reiterated this position at its various annual summits.

I should now like to turn to the issue of cooperation in the area of economic and social development. It must be said at the outset that this area has shown little progress despite the renewed commitment of the international community to come to the aid of Africa. The extent of the African continent's needs in this regard and the stagnation — indeed decline — in the resources available to the agencies and programmes of the United Nations system are the main reasons for the absence of progress. While African countries have mobilized to meet the challenges of underdevelopment, poverty and disease, they obviously cannot do so without the backing of the United Nations system, including the backing of the Bretton Woods institutions and of the international community as a whole.

While some good progress has been made here and there, the overall situation across the continent — where one fourth of all people living below the poverty line live — remains alarming in many ways. According to recent studies, to control current trends across the continent and attain the development objectives the international community set for itself between now and the year 2015, Africa must ensure a constant annual growth rate of 7 per cent over the next 10 years. This points to the extent of the challenges that must be met at a time when development aid, which is already meagre, continues to decline every year, Africa's debt continues to set new records and HIV/AIDS pandemic is far from being reversed.

The final review of the New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s, planned for next year, will no doubt provide the United Nations, African countries and their development partners an opportunity to undertake a frank evaluation of the work done in the last 10 years in the framework of that initiative. We hope that will be an occasion to study the

reasons why that ambitious programme did not succeed and to draw appropriate lessons from what must rightly be called a failure.

The New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), which was adopted at the last OAU Summit and which constitutes an appropriate and renewed framework for resuming cooperation between Africa and its partners, gives us grounds to hope that the problems encountered in the old initiatives will be overcome. The broad international support already enjoyed by this truly African initiative — which was reaffirmed at the last G-8 Summit and at the most recent meeting in Brussels between representatives of the European Union and the OAU — bode well for Africa.

In that regard, the United Nations can and must play a major role both to strengthen institutional capacity in Africa and to mobilize the necessary international support to make NEPAD a success. Furthermore, this is how we envisage the cooperation between the United Nations and the African Union in the years to come.

With regard to the contribution of the United Nations per se to development projects in Africa, it will continue to depend on the resources that its agencies and programmes manage to mobilize in the future for the benefit of the African continent. Those resources have in the past been the Achilles heel of cooperation between the OAU and the United Nations. For that matter, the same problem exists in another sector of cooperation between the OAU and the United Nations, namely, that of humanitarian action.

Given that conflicts, natural disasters and the expansion of poverty, Africa continues to have a large number of refugees. Although the numbers have declined somewhat, there are today about 7 million refugees in Africa. The absence of infrastructure and adequate ways of coping with refugee flows and natural disasters make it virtually impossible to come to grips with such situations solely with the means available to host countries.

In that regard, we should point out the vital role played by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), particularly in Africa. Permanent contact and cooperation between the OAU and UNHCR illustrate that humanitarian issues on the African continent are of interest and importance to both organizations.

Nevertheless, it should be noted that the problem of resources remains acute and that contributions made in response to the consolidated humanitarian appeals for Africa have never reached the level of three fourths of the necessary resources. We encourage UNHCR and the OAU to increase their cooperation in order to implement the global plan adopted at the thirty-seventh session of the OAU Council of Ministers and the agreement signed between the two organizations on 9 April 2001. We call on donor countries to further demonstrate their generosity so that in its humanitarian efforts in Africa the United Nations is not forced to make difficult and painful choices.

These are the thoughts my delegation wanted to share with the Assembly today in the wake of the Millennium Assembly and on the eve of the launching of the African Union. We want the African Union to be seen as an expression of African States' renewed desire to take control, assume their responsibilities on behalf of their peoples and open a new chapter of cooperation with the rest of humankind.

Mr. Kafando (Burkina Faso) (*spoke in French*): One year ago, as a prelude to the Millennium Summit, the presiding officers of the national parliaments of almost every country met in this very forum to remind the world that, despite their organizational and structural differences, the United Nations and the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) nevertheless pursue the same objective, namely, to promote a world of justice and peace through dialogue and diplomatic means. By signing a cooperation agreement with the Inter-Parliamentary Union in 1996, the United Nations explicitly recognized that reality, and thus made manifest its desire to create a partnership with the world organization of parliaments in order to establish a synergy of efforts in various areas, particularly those of peace and security, economic and social development, international and human rights law, democracy and gender equality.

Resolutions 55/2, of 8 September 2000, and 55/19, of 8 November 2000, which both deal with the strengthening of cooperation between the United Nations and the Inter-Parliamentary Union, marked the beginning of the consolidation of the desirable cooperation between the two organizations. We should welcome them as a sign of our being on the right track.

The diplomatic activity of the Inter-Parliamentary Union and its members — that is,

national parliaments — on the international scene is today a reality in terms of the positions adopted by the IPU and its members with regard to the major challenges that spur the efforts of the international community. Whether it is a matter of peace and security; of development and the environment; of health, such as the AIDS pandemic; of society, such as high-risk social groups, like women and children; or general political matters, such as the democratization of society and the protection and promotion of human rights, the Inter-Parliamentary Union and national parliaments play their roles as fully as possible to seek appropriate responses to various concerns. In other words, the IPU spares no effort to join its efforts with those of States, non-governmental organizations and, above all, the United Nations, to overcome the challenges that mankind is facing.

In terms of the issues it dealt with, and especially given the relevance of the results of its work, the 106th Conference of the Inter-Parliamentary Union, which was hosted by my country from 9 to 15 September 2001, was a perfect illustration of the current diplomatic dynamic in the world organization of parliaments. My delegation is convinced that this dynamic diplomacy could provide support for the actions and efforts of the United Nations.

The draft resolution on cooperation between the United Nations and the Inter-Parliamentary Union, which we strongly support and of which we are a sponsor, will no doubt add a parliamentary dimension to some of the work of the United Nations. One thing is certain: we can no longer ignore parliamentary diplomacy, which has now become a reality. It is therefore urgent and vital that the United Nations grant permanent observer status to the Inter-Parliamentary Union.

In that regard, Burkina Faso deplores the foot-dragging that has caused a decision on this important question to be postponed to the fifty-seventh session of the General Assembly. The only advantage to that is that the time given to Member States will lead them to reflect and better understand the urgent need to finally grant the Inter-Parliamentary Union — which has to a great degree proved its credibility — permanent observer status at the United Nations, with, of course, all the prerogatives that will allow it to play the role of a genuine consultative body vis-à-vis the United Nations.

Mr. De Ruyt (Belgium) (*spoke in French*): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union. The countries of Central and Eastern Europe associated with the European Union — Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia — and the associated countries of Cyprus, Malta and Turkey, as well as the European Free Trade Association country member of the European Economic Area, Iceland, align themselves with this statement.

Allow me, first of all, to say how pleased I am that these draft resolutions have been brought together under a single agenda item on the general topic of cooperation between the United Nations and regional and other organizations. We believe that by bringing together these draft resolutions, which deal with each organization individually, we shall be able to hold a single, comprehensive debate on the subject rather than several specific debates, which would prevent us from working out an overall United Nations policy on this matter. This is a step forward in our efforts towards revitalizing the General Assembly.

The subject of cooperation with regional organizations is cropping up more and more in the various bodies of the United Nations. In an increasing number of its operations on the ground, the United Nations is calling on the services of relevant regional organizations, among other things because in certain areas those organizations are able to provide expertise to complement that of the United Nations.

I would like to thank the Secretary-General for the individual reports that he has carefully drafted on cooperation between the United Nations and the organizations concerned. Those reports give us an overall view of how relations are developing, highlighting strengths but also weaknesses. They are undoubtedly the ideal way of helping us to improve our cooperation programmes.

Allow me to digress briefly to dwell on those regional organizations that have particularly strengthened their cooperation with the United Nations in recent years.

As regards the Organization of African Unity (OAU), the Secretary-General's report rightly points out that the programme of cooperation between the United Nations and the OAU is an ambitious one. We are pleased that the programme has not only been followed up, but that its scope has also been broadened

and defined more accurately. Given that over a third of the countries in Africa are currently involved, or have been involved recently, in armed conflict, it is extremely encouraging to see that consultations on African issues between the two organizations are now a matter of routine. What is more, the OAU is itself in the process of transforming itself into the African Union, a development warmly welcomed by the European Union.

Coordination between the United Nations and the OAU in the area of conflict prevention, and the linking of their efforts on conflict resolution, is beginning to take shape. This is a considerable achievement, although there is still much to be done in this area, especially in the operational field. The two joint peacekeeping operations in which they are currently engaged are grounds for guarded optimism. In any case, the United Nations should capitalize on these two experiments in order to support in a more systematic way the development of the OAU's capacity to respond to political and military crises.

Africa has given fresh impetus to the development of the continent with the New Partnership for Africa's Development. We congratulate them on that. This is not just an African effort to solve African problems, but also an initiative with clear objectives that makes democracy, transparency, good governance, the rule of law and human rights fundamental components of development. Africa remains a top Union priority. We are its largest donor and its most important trading partner. The strategic partnership between Europe and Africa was reaffirmed and consolidated in April 2000 at the Africa-Europe Summit held in Cairo. The European Union is gratified by the success of the Africa-Europe mid-term ministerial conference organized following the summit in Brussels in October 2001 under the auspices of the OAU and the European Union. The European Union is also pleased that progress has been made on implementing the Cairo Plan of Action, and will make its contribution to see to it that the momentum can be continued within the existing mechanisms in the run-up to the next Africa-Europe summit, scheduled for 2003.

Considering the involvement and investment of the member States of the European Union in the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), the importance we attach to its cooperation with the United Nations should be clear. The OSCE has traditionally taken a pragmatic approach to relations

with the international organizations working in its region. At the beginning of this week a ministerial meeting of OSCE member States was held in Bucharest to consider, among other things, the progress made on the Platform for Cooperative Security, adopted in Lisbon in 1996, which is designed to secure closer cooperation between the OSCE and other international organizations on the ground. As far as the United Nations is concerned, this year we have once again found ourselves working together more closely and energetically. I could quote the example of cooperation in the Balkans, Georgia or Tajikistan, where conflict-prevention, early warning, crisis-management and rehabilitation measures have been carried to a successful conclusion.

At that same ministerial meeting, the OSCE adopted a decision on combating terrorism aimed, *inter alia*, at ensuring implementation of United Nations decisions in that area. It also undertook to strengthen and develop its collaboration with the United Nations in combating terrorism. In addition, the two organizations can optimize the synergies existing in other spheres of action, such as human rights or the strengthening of democratic values in general. The OSCE and the United Nations maintain practical and effective collaboration. The two member States of the European Union that will preside over the OSCE in 2002 and 2003 will ensure the continuity of the collaboration.

The European Union attaches great importance to strengthening cooperation between the United Nations and national parliaments through the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU). It welcomes the initiatives taken by the two organizations to allow parliaments to contribute to major events organized by the United Nations, as well as the action taken by parliaments under IPU leadership to support or supplement the work of the United Nations.

The European Union fully endorses the declarations of the Millennium Assembly and the Conference of Presiding Officers of National Parliaments on the need for closer relations between the United Nations and the IPU. It is grateful to the Secretary-General for the interesting recommendations contained in his report on cooperation between the two organizations. The European Union regrets that, despite clear consensus among Member States, the General Assembly has not been able to take the decision to grant the IPU a new status. It hopes that, in the near

future, the General Assembly will take practical measures to strengthen cooperation between the two organizations, including by granting the IPU the status it deserves.

The European Union is pleased that cooperation between the United Nations and the International Organization of la Francophonie has continued to deepen over the last year. That cooperation now covers a growing number of areas of activity of mutual interest to both organizations. It is marked by a healthy awareness of their respective comparative advantages and by a constant desire for complementarity in the political, economic, social and cultural arenas.

The Union was pleased that the Bamako symposium held in November 2000 on the track record in the practice of democracy involved the United Nations in its proceedings. The Union welcomed this cooperation in promoting democracy, and particularly welcomed the fact that a range of measures were adopted in March 2001 with a view to strengthening cooperation between the International Organization of la Francophonie and the Electoral Assistance Division of the Department of Political Affairs of the Secretariat.

The United Nations and the Council of Europe have many values in common, including the promotion of human rights, pluralist democracy and stability. Cooperation between the two organizations makes sense given the expertise that the Council of Europe has gained in areas such as human rights, democratic institutions and the rule of law. As members know, the States members of the European Union also have a large stake in the work of the Council of Europe, and we therefore regard such cooperation with great enthusiasm.

That cooperation has been demonstrated through a number of fruitful initiatives. Let me mention the Council's assistance to Member States in ratifying and implementing the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court; the contribution of the Council of Europe to organizing next year's special session of the General Assembly on children; and the Council's role in the capacity-building programme of the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo, particularly its contribution to the preparations for and observation of the elections that took place in Kosovo three weeks ago. In the light of such past experience, the European Union is convinced that this cooperation

should be intensified and developed to the greatest possible extent.

We are very pleased to note that cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization of the Islamic Conference has continued over the past year. By participating in each other's work, the two organizations have been able to intensify their cooperation in areas of mutual interest. The periodic high-level meetings between the Secretaries-General of the United Nations and of the Organization of the Islamic Conference should be continued.

That is also how the European Union views cooperation between the United Nations and the League of Arab States. We are happy to note that the two organizations have remained in close contact on many questions. It is therefore of the highest importance that the League of Arab States should further intensify its relations and contacts and improve its mechanism for consultation with United Nations specialized agencies and programmes. Contacts between the United Nations and the League should also continue at a high level with regard to exchanges of views and information on regional questions of mutual interest.

The European Union is most grateful to the Secretary-General for arranging last month's Conference on Facilitating the Entry into Force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty in his capacity as Depositary of the Treaty. The Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization (CTBTO) has given firm support to United Nations efforts, in particular in the field of international security, arms control and disarmament. The European Union therefore welcomes the adoption of a partnership agreement between the Preparatory Commission for the CTBTO and the United Nations and the conclusion of cooperation agreements with specialized agencies and programmes of the United Nations.

Let me now address the important work, both past and future, of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW). The European Union has always attached the greatest importance to the activities of that organization, particularly given the risk that such arms might fall into the hands of terrorists. It welcomes the decision taken by the OPCW in May 2001 to approve the text of an agreement on relations between that organization and the United

Nations, an agreement which the General Assembly approved last September. The European Union hopes that mutually beneficial cooperation will be established between the two organizations for the common good.

The European Union encourages the Secretaries-General of the United Nations and of the Pacific Islands Forum to take the necessary steps to promote and extend cooperation between their secretariats in areas of mutual interest. That cooperation should, of course, extend to the specialized agencies and programmes of the United Nations, with which the Pacific Islands Forum and its associated institutions should initiate, maintain and increase joint consultations and programmes.

We welcome the role played by the Economic Cooperation Organization in the economic development of its member States, as well as the practical examples of cooperation between that organization and the United Nations. In the light of their shared objective, which is to promote international cooperation by addressing economic, social, cultural and humanitarian problems, the two organizations should pursue and deepen their cooperation not only in areas where collaboration already exists but also in those which might profit from regional stability and from cooperation among the members of the organization.

It is our duty to intensify dialogue with regional organizations and to explore areas where such organizations provide the ideal complement to the activities of the United Nations. Regular exchanges of views and information can only enrich the work of the United Nations.

Mr. Nejad Hosseinian (Islamic Republic of Iran): At the outset, let me thank the Secretary-General for his concise report (A/56/122) on agenda item 21 (h), "Cooperation between the United Nations and the Economic Cooperation Organization". I would like also to extend my sincere appreciation to the Secretary-General of the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO) and his colleagues for their endeavours to strengthen and expand cooperation between ECO and various bodies and specialized agencies within the United Nations system.

As we all know, in our current global environment the world is becoming more and more integrated and, in a sense, borderless. In response, developing countries are establishing among

themselves the necessary institutional frameworks to strengthen their individual and collective capacities so that they can benefit from the potential and the opportunities of the ongoing and unfolding process of globalization. The establishment of regional economic groupings has become the most common and appropriate approach by these countries towards smooth integration into the world economy. It should be emphasized, however, that the policy response to globalization needs to be comprehensive and coherent at both the regional and the international levels. Moreover, the establishment and strengthening of regional arrangements in the economic, trade and finance areas requires also a conducive international environment, especially in the field of capacity-building.

The Economic Cooperation Organization, comprising 10 developing countries, is a regional arrangement that aims at the expansion and consolidation of economic, technical and technological cooperation among its member States. The longer-term objective is the promotion of common institutions for the smooth movement of goods and capital among ECO member States and the facilitation of their gradual integration into the world economy and of their active and meaningful participation in the globalization process. In recent years, expansion of cooperation in the social and cultural fields has also received increasing attention within the ECO. The ECO secretariat, headquartered in Tehran, has focused its activities on finding the necessary means at the regional and international levels to address the common challenges facing member States and to facilitate the organization's participation in the international economy.

The recent situation in Afghanistan also underlines the need for more regional cooperation to create prosperity, which will serve to promote peace and security in the region. In particular, the establishment of cooperative arrangements with the United Nations bodies, agencies, funds and programmes has been at the heart of these efforts. These areas of fruitful cooperation have huge potential that needs to be explored further and realized, and we hope that the current situation in the region will give more impetus to the expansion and promotion of such cooperation.

The geographical position and economic potential of the Economic Cooperation Organization region,

which has oil and gas reserves and abundant mineral resources as well as a rich cultural and literary heritage, provide the necessary ingredients for sound and sustainable economic growth in various fields within the region and strong economic relations with neighbouring countries and regional economic groups. There is also considerable agricultural potential in the vast lands of the Economic Cooperation Organization countries, including both livestock and grain production. It should be added, however, that the political, economic, social and environmental challenges in the region are equally great.

The transition from centrally planned to market-oriented economies is among the important challenges for some of the organization's members. The landlocked countries of the Central Asian member States of the Economic Cooperation Organization, an area of pressing challenges for them and the entire organization, call for the strengthening of the transit infrastructure at the regional level.

The free flow of oil and gas from the area to the world market, if not hampered or distorted by politically motivated efforts from without, can certainly play a significant role in the overall development of the energy-producing States in the region and contribute to the integration of Economic Cooperation Organization members into the world economy as viable partners.

The rich cultural and literary heritage of the Economic Cooperation Organization region, and its abundant opportunities for cultural development, could also contribute to the expansion of tourism and cultural cooperation within the region.

As I have indicated, the challenges facing the region are also quite extensive. Protection of the environment, particularly in the Caspian Sea, the Aral Sea and some other areas of Central Asia, is among the major challenges facing the littoral States and concerned countries in the organization. The Economic Cooperation Organization region is also among those that are highly prone to natural disasters, particularly earthquake and drought. Since last year, the latter has taken a tremendous toll of human casualties, with a devastating impact on the socio-economic infrastructure of the region's countries.

The region also continues to be afflicted with the scourge of the illicit cultivation, production, trafficking and consumption of narcotic drugs, whose serious

adverse impacts on the social, economic and security structure of the countries in the region are known to the international community and hardly need to be emphasized.

With regard to the question of cooperation with the United Nations system, the growing level of cooperation and joint programmes between the Economic Cooperation Organization and such bodies as the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) and the United Nations International Drug Control Programme (UNDCP) is encouraging and needs to be strengthened further.

Last year, cooperation between the Economic Cooperation Organization and UNCTAD was extended to the new areas of implementation of the Transit Trade Agreement, the trade and custom clearance aspects of multi-modal transport in the Economic Cooperation Organization region, and trade efficiency and e-commerce. The International Trade Centre UNCTAD/WTO (ITC) extended its technical cooperation to include boosting the level of intra-regional trade. The Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), as the main regional commission dealing with our region, has been very active, both individually and in cooperation with other bodies and regional commissions of the United Nations system, in extending its cooperation with the Economic Cooperation Organization and its provision of technical assistance in areas such as the economic performance in the Economic Cooperation Organization region, strengthening subregional economic cooperation in trade and investment, development and establishment of an Economic Cooperation Organization network for trade and investment information exchange, and multi-modal transportation.

The United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) is also assisting Economic Cooperation Organization efforts with regard to capacity-building in small and medium-size enterprises. Cooperation with the United Nations International Drug Control Programme has been expanding, and the first phase of the project to establish a Drug Control Coordination Unit in the

Economic Cooperation Organization secretariat, with the assistance of bilateral donors, was completed in December 2000, with the objective of increasing coordination and collaboration among member States of the Economic Cooperation Organization in the control of illicit drugs. We hope that the second phase of this project will begin according to the established timetable.

Although cooperation between the United Nations system and the Economic Cooperation Organization has been expanding, including in the new fields of activities, we believe that ample opportunities and unrealized potential exist for further expansion. We are confident that new areas of cooperation can be jointly explored and operationalized with such other agencies as the United Nations Children's Fund and the United Nations Development Fund for Women in the fight against narcotic drugs, as well as with UNESCO and the World Tourism Organization in the areas of cultural development and tourism.

I should also like to express my delegation's deep appreciation to the Secretary-General for the comprehensive and informative report entitled "Cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization of the Islamic Conference", contained in document A/56/398. The report provides evidence that the United Nations and the Organization of the Islamic Conference have been working in close cooperation in their common search for solutions to world crises in various areas, namely, international peace and security, peacekeeping efforts, disarmament, the right to self-determination and other fundamental human rights.

My delegation believes that deepening relations between the two organizations through high-level contacts, regular consultations and technical meetings could contribute to the promotion of the purposes and principles of the United Nations. The Charter of the United Nations encourages these activities through regional cooperation to promote the Organization's purposes and principles.

Obviously, joint efforts to resolve the continued crisis in Afghanistan are one of the priorities of the

United Nations that figure prominently in the agenda of the OIC. The recent developments have paved the way for the realization of the long-held aspirations of the Afghan nation for the restoration of peace and security in the country, free from the scourge of war and foreign interference, as well as the formation of a broad-based and multi-ethnic Government. In this regard, the OIC member States have constantly stressed the prime role of the United Nations. The United Nations and the OIC need to cooperate with a view to mobilizing the resources required for the provision of humanitarian assistance as well as the reconstruction of Afghanistan.

The OIC has played a major role in promoting the United Nations Year of Dialogue among Civilizations. The OIC Ad-Hoc Committee on Dialogue among Civilizations, chaired by the Islamic Republic of Iran, held several meetings at United Nations Headquarters with other groups within the United Nations in 2000 and 2001 to negotiate and finalize the draft Global Agenda for Dialogue among Civilizations.

Finally, thanks to a very constructive partnership on the part of regional groups, 106 Member States sponsored the draft resolution, which was adopted by consensus in the General Assembly on 9 November 2001.

My delegation believes that the importance and utility of the new paradigm of dialogue in the conduct of international relations is more evident today than when it was first initiated by President Khatami.

We are confident that draft resolution A/56/L.36, which will be introduced by the Ambassador of Mali, and draft resolution A/56/L.32, introduced by the Ambassador of Tajikistan, serve as the appropriate bases for promoting joint activities in 2002 that fall within the common purposes of these organizations, the goals of which are to ensure international cooperation in seeking solutions to international and regional economic, social, cultural and humanitarian problems. I would like to recommend that the draft resolutions be adopted by consensus.

The meeting rose at 1.15 p.m.